

Directions for the Collection and Submission of Dead Bird Specimens for West Nile Virus Testing

Michigan Department of Community Health

Diagnostic Center for Population and Animal Health

IMPORTANT: If the specimen container is received leaking, not properly labeled, test requisition not completed or specimen label does not match test requisition, the specimen will not be tested.

1. Remove all kit components from the shipping container.
2. Using the pre-numbered labels provided, add your county name or FIPS code to the blank space in front of the number and place one sticker on the specimen transport tube, and the other on the corresponding test requisition in the **MDCH SPECIMEN NUMBER** block.
3. Glove hands and don eye protection and a particulate filter mask.
4. Open the swab packaging (swab will either be in a paper wrapper or plastic tube) on the handle end of the swab leaving the Dacron end covered until needed.
5. Grab the bottom of one of the zip lock bags with your non-dominant hand and invert the bag over that hand so that you end up with the bag inside out over the non-dominant hand.
6. Collect the bird into the bag by picking up the tail end of the bird and moving the top part of the bag over the bird, covering the bird completely. The beak of the bird should be close to the opening of the bag.
7. Lay the **bagged bird** on the ground or other flat surface.
8. Position the opening of the bag away from your body, grab the neck/beak of the bird with your non-dominant hand from **outside the bag** and position the beak open. If necessary, pinch the corners of the mouth/beak and with your fingers open the beak. **Do not pry at the sharp point of the beak.** In some cases it may be necessary to use a craft stick to further pry open the beak. Place the craft stick, flat side up, into the opening of the beak and then turn it 90 degrees, opening the beak enough to allow the swab to enter.
9. Grasp the swab handle with your dominant hand and swab the inner beak, and oral cavity.
10. After specimen collection place the swab either back into the original plastic tube or alternate plastic tube provided. It will be necessary to break the shaft of the swab with the alternate plastic tube. If possible, tape the joint/cap of the tube.
11. Place the tube containing the swab into the Styrofoam shipping container provided.
13. Seal the zip lock bag containing the bird with gloved hands.
14. Place the sealed bag containing the bird into the second zip lock bag. Remove gloves and mask and place them and any other debris into the second bag zip lock bag and seal. The bagged carcass and used collection supplies **must** be disposed of in a landfill or be incinerated.
12. Wrap **completed** test requisition around outside of Styrofoam container and slide the Styrofoam and test requisition into the shipping sleeve.
13. Apply the diagnostic specimens label, express mail stamp and the **completed**, pre-addressed U. S. Express Mail return-mailing label to the shipping sleeve. **Do not use any other label to designate this material other than those provided.** Ship specimen to the laboratory via next day U.S. Express Mail as soon as possible. Avoid shipping specimens on Fridays or prior to holidays.

Note on Shipment: Specimens should be shipped the day of collection. If specimen is collected on Friday, however, there is no Saturday delivery to the processing lab. There are two options available. If it is a bird carcass that has been submitted by the public for swabbing, the carcass can:

- a) Be stored refrigerated over the weekend, swabbed the following Monday, specimen sent, and carcass disposed of.
- b) Be swabbed on Friday, carcass disposed of, and the swab frozen over the weekend for Monday shipment.

NOTE: The shipper is responsible for being sure that their package is in compliance with the current shipping regulations.